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ABSTRACT

The nature of reading has changed over the course of time. As more people learned to read and write, the rules became firmer, that is, readers became bound to the forms of the printed text so that rules of the written language became a necessity. Fifty years ago, adults in Denmark who had difficulty in reading could manage tolerably well, though only at a few places within the industrial society. Twenty-five years ago, it was rare for Danes not to be fairly good readers, and today the Dane who cannot read is an invalid while the one who cannot write faces even more difficulties. Every single change in industry increases the requirements for knowledge, and every single change increases the demands for reading and writing. Although the reading of a runic stone and of a computer display unit share some common features, each requires a different power of abstraction, development of concepts, attitude, level of complexity, and previous knowledge. In communication, reading must not be allowed to disappear: educators must teach students that reading is also content and that, among other things, reading is important for the continuation of cultural heritage and for the enlargement of knowledge. We cannot define the possibilites that will be contained in "reading" in just one or two decades from now, but we can try to extrapolate some of what we can now see in the light of change. (HOD)

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"Full Participation"

Second European Conference on Reading
2nd-5th August, 1981, Joensuu, Finland

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Mogens Jansen,
Danish Institute of Educational Research:

"The Disabled Reader
in a Changing World
- and Full Participation"

CS206356

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The slide rule disappeared
and with it much sound doubt

Illustration 1:
Vignette of slide rule.

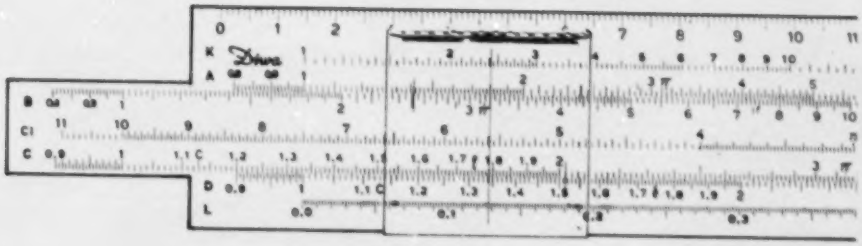
I should like to start with this ancient thing, the slide rule! It is at least ten years, since it was sold in my country, and in 1974 all the remaining copies were collected at one of our institutes of higher education and sent to Zambia.

And in a way this is connected with reading. Such a slide rule gave some approximate figures. In that way it presented a challenge to the sound human doubt of the user, when he or she had reached a final figure.

When a figure was reached, this question was asked: "But - can this be correct? Is it probable?" or: "Does this figure correspond to what is my experience?" - More than one pupil had sound doubts about the right placing of a comma!

After the slide rule 'the electronic pocket calculator' appeared. At that time the pocket computer was nothing more than that. Thus the approximate figure was substituted by something which was uncritically accepted. The estimated calculation was replaced by something final - and correct.

It started with the automatic acceptance of the figure arrived at, and little by little it was not altogether seldom found that what one had to accept "was presumably what was technically possible". The next generation of calculators wrote the word "ERROR" themselves, if something was done wrongly - that is: wrongly in relation to technology and mechanics. But not wrongly in relation to logic.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Please do not misunderstand me: Not for one moment do I want the slide rule back. It is only my generation (and my pupils' generation) who will have to learn to live easier with the new possibilities provided by the pocket calculator.

It is our fault, if we do not utilize the pocket calculator in such a way that we get more out of that than we got out of the slide rule. 2 + 2 is still 4. But many relations concerning arithmetic, the mathematics, were changed in only 10 years.

*

And actually this introduction does concern reading, because also reading has changed its nature in the course of the time. We just don't see it very clearly, because it has not happened at the same rate.

And I am willing to admit that I believe that 'the little black box' somewhere inside the human being is still the same, also even though perhaps it does not exist, but is 'only' - for instance - a dynamic interaction of biochemical processes which we do not know yet.

However, everything else regarding reading has changed in the course of time:

The world of reading has changed. And that affects the readers; it is not a matter of Reading but of Readers - and that is why the changing world affects us and our pupils.

When words were monuments,
and only the few exceptions were readers

With this we have come to the very question about reading. I have chosen to try and look also historically at this subject and to start from Northern, especially Danish data. It is a narrow view, and of course that is a fault.

Please insert
illustration of
the runic stone.
Illustration 2

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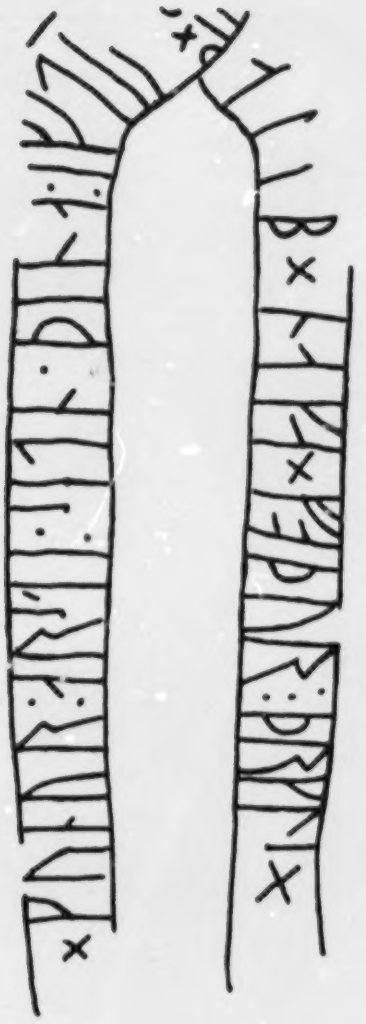
(2)

Lundahl, Flemming (ed.): Rune-rister med læse--stave-vanskeligheder (Rune carver with problems in reading and spelling). Læsepædagogen (The Reading Teacher), 1973, 21(8), 539-540.



With this picture of a runic stone - which is about 1,000 years old - we have come to some of the early reading here in the Northern countries. Not at all the first. Reading does not begin here. Many, many years before the runes the people in the North have been able to read symbols, signs, 'letters', etc. - of various kinds. The first Danes are supposed to have come to Denmark more than 240,000 years ago, and with Alexander Marshack (Marschack, 1972)

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we could go back to these nomadic hunters. It would be an exciting journey back into time - and a much too long journey in this connection.

However, exactly by this runic stone the disabled reader (or at least "The Disabled Writer" - the one who had writing difficulties) is brought into the picture. Because in more than one place this runic stone is adorned with the same kind of mistakes as we know from those of our pupils who have problems: Lateral reversions, reversals, etc. (Lundahl, 1973).

We wrote in stone then. And the runes we wrote meant something - for the one who wrote them. At the same time the runes told something about the person writing; for they were the writer's monument to his kin and to himself.

The contents of what was written were briefly formulated memories. The others bowed their head in veneration.

As long as the letters were runes (and the material used to write on was stone or wood), it was theoretically possible to read the total Northern literature in one morning. And those who could read this whole literature would hardly have been more persons than could be held in a lecture room (if they had been gathered and could have agreed long enough).

The rune carver knew what his runes meant. (It was in fact his, not her runes! I cannot change the history with retroactive force.) All others got to know it - and nobody asked, "if it was true", "if the source material could be trusted", etc. Reading represented something else than today!

Those who could not read were the very, very large majority. It was possible to participate fully in the work and the daily life of that time, even without being able to "read" these signs - which may or may not have been magic for everyone.

People knew what was said
in the literature, because it was prohibited
for anything else to be said.
And only the very few were readers

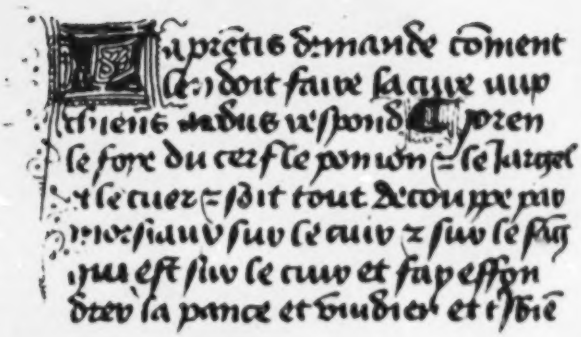
Some hundreds years later the written language was Latin, and parchment was now the writing material used. The literature in the Northern countries was now decisively larger. Those who were able to read and write here in the North were so many that they could not live within the University of Joensuu. But at least they could find accomodation in the town of Joensuu.

And to the most people by far the contents of what was written were in practice always well-known matter. At any rate, the attitude, the way of thinking, etc. behind it were well-known. People could improve upon their handwriting, but not upon their stories. The stories came from God.

Please insert the
illustration of
the old bible.
Illustration 3

3

Calligraphy. I: The New Encyclopædia Brittannica. Volume 3. Knowledge in Depth. 15. udg. Chicago: 1978, p. 656.



The books of the Middle Ages at that time meant something to people which they all knew well already. Nobody doubted it. And most of them by far knew it, before they learned to read it. They knew what was said by the written word, before they read it.

They did not either doubt it. The written word was a praise - and it became an important part of a world picture.

Please insert
illustration of
the hymn.
Illustration 4

The reading matter was no longer the same as the reading matter of the runic stone. The Reader's situation had changed. But the reading of that time was certainly not either the same reading as the one we use when reading the washing instructions for a dress or a shirt we want to buy.

Those who could not read were still the majority - the large majority. They were not disabled with regard to reading. It was the others, the reading few, who were particularly skilled. People could share fully in both the workday life and the sundays, even if they could not read.

"The Disabled Writer" is also known from some of these handwritten books. But that is another story.

The doubt is on its way!
The reading matter expands,
and many become readers

With the Reformation and the expansion of trade the mother tongues came into the picture. At first they were subordinate to Latin; later the mother tongues became the common reading languages and written languages.

(4)

Britten, Benjamin & Imogen Holst: Musikkens Historie. (The Story of Music). Copenhagen: Forlaget Fremad, 1959, p. 21.

Now the writing material was paper; and already with the first use of Gutenberg's loose types the amount of literature had become dramatically larger than it was when handwritten. At the same time the contents had become much more faceted than before. Below is "Der Kramer mit der neuen Zeitung", and newspapers are definitely not coming from God! Not at that time either.

Illustration
of newsvendor.
Illustration 5

An explosion of knowledge has taken place - of such dimensions that it has only been fully realized during the hundreds of years after Gutenberg.

Those who could not read this literature were able to find many, many places where they could be fully valid fellow citizens. But - - - there were things from which they were cut off.

Those who could read this literature were so many that there would probably be room for them here in Joensuu and environs.

And those who could also write had privileges, because they could write.

And the doubt towards what was printed was on its way. The words were no longer monuments; and certainly they were not always a praise either - which is more than suggested by this woodcut of street singers!

Reading had changed. The world of the reader had changed.

Illustration
of street singers.
Illustration 6

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(5)

Burke, Peter: Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe.
London: Temple Smith, 1978, p. 98.

(6)

Burke, Peter: Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe.
London: Temple Smith, 1978. p. 98.

The development of reading from the end of the fifteenth century till about the eighteenth century took the same course in large parts of Northern and Western Europe:

In the sixteenth century it was the church which encouraged reading. But this encouragement was supplemented with traditions for private instruction, in a few larger towns in schools, etc. It now becomes a wish to transform a popular culture to fit the Christian faith and culture better - among other things by dissemination of the educational possibilities (Markussen & Skovgaard-Petersen, 1981).

And when this is actually the wish, reading has become something central.

During the same period of time "a commercialization of the popular culture" (Burke, 1978) - and of reading takes place. Among other things it is effected by a dissemination of other things than holy writings - of popular literature, broadsheet ballads, etc. More than anything this is a continuation of verbal traditions.

And little by little large parts of the social life are freed from the religious background. And the world of reading is changing. - The "big jump forward" in reading took place in connection with what Toffler calls "the second wave" (Toffler, 1981).

By this expression he is thinking of the period during which the industrial society definitively ousted the agricultural society. That Toffler's "third wave" synchronize precisely with the situation which is later in this account described as "the second (reading) explosion" ought to invite reflection; Perhaps there are more realities behind the general principles presented here than we care to think about.

Now the written language must be laid down,
and then "Disabled Spellers and Writers" emerge.
Those who have reading difficulties
have a hard time

We know that it is through the deviations the art is achieved - or the failure. The balance is minute, but nobody is in doubt, whether it is successful or not.

And Hans Andersen, the most famous Danish writer from the nineteenth century, had problems in spelling and writing. (Rosendal, 1975).

He had to fight with his text, because now the way of writing - both with regard to letters, words, and sentences - had become so firm that there were rules to be observed, if one did not want to be a "Disabled Writer". If one was unable to observe certain rules, one was no good.

Only a hundred years earlier Ludvig Holberg, the Dano-Norwegian writer, had written a language which varied in some details from one book to the other. He did not find it important, if a word in Danish was spelled in one way or another; anyhow the people who printed and read his books did not regard it as important.

*

However, the more people learn to read, the firmer the rules must be. The readers now became bound to the forms of the printed text. Now the things must be written in the same way. The form becomes firm. But the contents are changed. The contents vary. Many people read many different things.

In this world the Disabled Reader faces many problems, because everybody is expected to be able to read. We have a world of readers!

There are now so many people who read that an established spelling has become a necessity. The rules of the written language are laid down. - To the delight of the many readers - and to the worry of at least the "Disabled Writers"!

The first explosion - more than 100 years ago.
It becomes hard (and lonely!) being a Disabled Reader

During the nineteenth century the width of the reading competence was greatly enlarged. Now there was also a commercial reason to read. There was an increasing supply of publications, books, and newspapers. Below a few examples from Scandinavia are given:

The majority of the readers had to read texts which were well-known beforehand: Primers, catechisms, hymns, etc. But the government wants to improve the learning of reading - a more active reading is what it wants. This is similar to the wish of the pietists that the individual should be able to acquire the Holy Bible.

But also a worldly use of the reading is seen - like the teaching of writing and arithmetic. In order to read in the texts, which were more or less learned by heart beforehand, a more 'modern' way of reading is adopted - not only by the élite; but for instance also by the children of the country people.

In Sweden and Norway the so-called "readers" appear. They were pious people who gathered in their homes, due to the rationalism of the priests, to read the Bible and the old Lutheran writings themselves.

In other words, a selfincreasing process had been started in the Northern countries during the first half of the nineteenth century, and the competences in reading and writing had now reached a certain point - and then the process gathered speed:

Literacy publications call for readers. But books, newspapers, etc. are also in themselves incentives to the learning of reading. To the whole population the expectation of reading competence becomes the greatest encouragement to learn to read.

The expectation itself of reading competences created a psychological demand for learning to read.

And now the reading itself demands something more and something else than before. - "Reading" has become much more than it was before. Readers are not the same persons that they were before.

We ourselves have shared
in the second explosion
It is crushing being a Disabled Reader now
- and it is difficult being a "Disabled Writer"

In t .e period from about 1955 to about 1980 an explosive g.owth - which is in many ways similar to the one mentioned above - has taken place in Denmark within the reading of the children and the young.

This diagram will show what happened:

Please insert
diagram here.
Illustration 7
(Jansen, Jacobsen & Jensen, 1978)

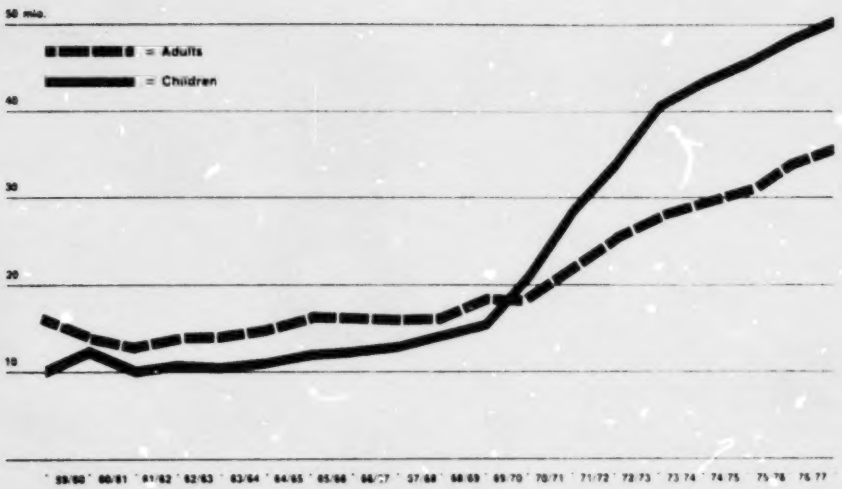
After 1975 we are able to count in two different ways, but in both cases the development is plain and clear! - All this points directly not only to the school of today, but also to the society of today where the requirement for reading comptence is seen already in the years of childhood. The children can no longer function meaningfully in school from the age of 9-10, if they cannot read. Neither can they function meaningfully when watching television from the Northern countries. They cannot follow the subtitles - in Scandinavia the many films and commentaries in foreign languages, which are sent on the television, are not provided with Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian speech, but with subtitles - for "everyone" is able to read(!)

And neither are they able to function in a way satisfactory to themselves in relation to the large amount of texts which they encounter in their daily life - also outside school. (Jansen, 1979).

This is not meant to be an argument that children ought to learn to read at an earlier stage than now. They should not, primarily because that would be an irrational spending of time.

(7)

Jansen, Mogens, Bo Jacobsen & Poul Erik Jensen:
The teaching og reading - without really any method.
An analysis of reading instruction in Denmark.
Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1978, and New Jersey:
Humanities Press Inc., 1978, p. 153.



On the other hand children at the age of abt. 8-10 must have time to read much - many different things and certainly not only what is written by themselves and others of their own age. That would be a terrible limitation of their possibilities.

The problem is not the time of the beginning of the reading instruction! The problem is the time which the school and the homes give the children to read:

"The limit to what can emerge from any process is determined by the resource which is most scanty. In a business organization of today time is the most scanty resource. And if time is not controlled, nothing else can be controlled. One is tempted to point out the fact that time differs from all other kinds of resources - there is no substitute for time," says Peter Drucker (Elbro et al, 1981).

Reading is an activity introduced into the world of the child from the first years of the child. And reading never lets go of the age groups who have started.

Up till now this latest 'reading wave' in Denmark has got to the point, when it includes the generations who are now 20-30 years old. (Kühl & Munk, 1979).

Illustration 8

The most reading generation ever to have existed in Denmark is our 12-16 year old children. This is hardly exactly what we think of spontaneously when we see them? - but more than 95% of them read often, read much, and of their own accord. They even use the books (!) What is meant is that the majority of these children use the books in a different way than our generation did.

So far, the fact that subject matter and the faction genre are used earlier and indeed more than before does not seem to have 'done any harm' to fiction.

8

	1968	1979
0– 6 year-old	36%	37%
7–11 – –	70%	95%
12–15 – –	75%	98%
Adults	40%	48%

And this reading wave will roll on - up through the years. We shall se another society - a society in which writing - and then books will mean something else and more than before. In my country we already see it fainly.

*

Reading is not reading of memorials. Reading is not only reading of the writings accepted by the ruling class of the society. Reading competence means that doubt has entered into the picture, and from a social view this is surely a very essential change. The present general reading competence means that the possibilities to examine for ourselves also the more distant things have become ours.

He who could read was able to get on here in the Northern countries - a hundred years ago.

50 years ago he or she who had difficulty in reading could manage tolerably well, as an adult, though only at a few places within the industrial life. And his or her daily life was poorer than was good for him or her.

25 years ago it had become very difficult not to be a fairly good reader, when one had to manage in the working life, and it became impossible to get on satisfactorily in the private life, in relation to State, local government, public authorities, the large organizations, etc.

Today the one who cannot read is an invalid; and the one who cannot write faces more and more difficulties. Technical changes will take place; we know that. Whether they will be the progress to the individual, as we hope, will depend, among other things - and only among other things - of the writing and reading competence of the individual. And exactly now and at this point I must look upon the demand for Full Participation and say, as my personal opinion: "It is frightening".

Now there are demands for reading
of more than mother tongue
and for reading of other things
than books.
Is Full Participation
a realistic practicability at this stage?

The mother tongue has become autocratic in the general teaching of reading - and remained so up to the most recent time.

Now demands for foreign languages have emerged forcibly - anyway within small language areas like ours in the North. And the other languages which we learn to speak and read to some degree, give us a greater knowledge, at least in some connections. To put it a bit solemnly and optimistically, they at least give us an extended conceptional apprehension. They admit new thinking.

*

In the old days 'reading' was something easy to grasp. The reading matter was not massproduced, but handwritten. Today other things are written but letters, books, newspapers, publications.

One cannot walk in a town or be in a house without encountering something written. And boks, books, and books are now unbelievably numerous.

Those who are able to read are by and large all the children of the Northern countries above 10-11 years of age - and all the young people and practically the entire adult population - - - apart from the heavily Disabled Readers. Their situation has changed drastically. This has happened in the course of a couple of hundred years, and we hardly reflect on it in our daily life. The following vision may indicate the extent:

If the population of the whole world were to use books, newspapers, publications, etc. to the same extent as we do in Scandinavia, there would not be forests enough to provide the material for all those books - not even in the first edition. From that point of view it is (at least!) an environmental advantage that just these years paper seems to be at first supplemented with - and then gradually more or less replaced by screens, cassettes, etc.

*

We say that television is going to replace books. Maybe it is, to some degree. But on the display units there will be electronically written texts.

We are going to have to work with our display units at home and elsewhere. We shall have to write messages and letters on them to each other. And so far it seems that those who read much will get accustomed to read more - even if they watch television. Our reading research in Denmark indicates that a polarization is about to become a reality (Jansen & Glæsel, 1977, Søegård et al., 1977, Elbro et al., 1981).

It ought to be a memento to those talking about "Full Participation". And we are probably the ones.

Illustration 9

(Elbro et al., 1981)

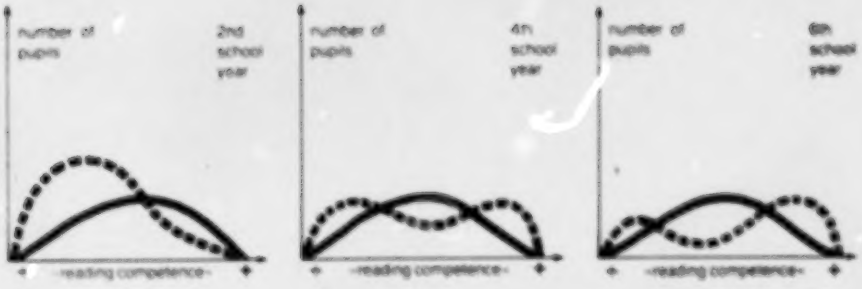
In these three figures it has been attempted to put together a number of results from reading surveys, of the one mentioned above. The exciting (or alarming, depending on the figures or parts of figures looked upon) thing is that one hardly ever hears a comment to these figures from a teacher, in the way of: "It cannot be true!" - on the contrary, everybody gives nods of recognition to the general tendencies of the figures.

The figures also correspond with the counts of book lendings and with the library experiences reproduced. It should be added that the tendency of the figures seems visible up to the age of 16-17.

By the way, the figure should be supplemented with the - in this connection - rather negative results

(9)

Elbro, Carsten, Mogens Jannsen & Henrik Löb: Hvor godt læser og staver børn i dag? (How well do children of today read and spell?). Copenhagen: Det Centrale Uddannelsesråd, 1981. Modersmålsopgaven. Arbejdspapir nr. 3.



indicating that in other instruction than the mother tongue instruction (equal to Reading and English) a large part of the pupils read only fragments of texts. At least here there is a challenge: In social science, etc. the pupils of today must learn to read and use books in quite a different manner than before. (Jensen & Kyed, 1978)

In summary: It is nothing negative that the good readers become more and more numerous - and that they become still better readers. It is a challenge to the wishes for "Full Participation" that not all become better readers. - But maybe at least some of them do? Only it is not noticed, because the demands also increase; and if the competence of the individual does not increase correspondingly, the disabled readers will have to face enormous problems.

But this is another matter - just let it pass as a suggestion.

The demands are increasing,
and more and more
"the human history
becomes a race between
Education
and Catastrophe"

I know that the day will come when what we say can automatically be converted into print. Nobody working seriously with futurology (cf e.g. Alvin Toffler, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber) would doubt this. In the research departments of the electronic industry these things are on the drawing board. During a private conversation the director of such a department said: "It is sure to happen within this millennium."

But also at that time the child - and the adult - who cannot himself or herself control what is written - will be badly off.

The one who is able to read will not gain distinction at all, because everybode is able to read. "Naturally, one can read" (not like some years ago, not like 80 years ago, but far more varied). And the Disabled Readers will find themselves in an increasingly bad situation.

The one who is able to write will be in power in exactly the same way as 5,000 years ago in ancient Egypt. And the requirements will rise.

There are many trades in which until two generations ago a book was never seen. Fifteen years ago there were in the same trades a couple of books to be rea and an evening school to be attended twice a week; maybe this does not apply everywhere, but at least in Denmark and also in Norway, as far as I know.

Now the basic requirements in the same trades are ten years of school with good marks in Danish, arithmetic (and in my country: English, the first foreign language). And in Denmark we can all see that the demand for a General Certificate ("studentereksamen")after 12-13 years of school is now little by little about to become a condition to enter into the same trades - which have incidentally changed rather dramatically with regard to contents.

Within many of these trades greater changes have occurred during the last 40 years than took place during the entire period from when the bronze smith forged swords - 2,000 years before Christ - till the time 40 years ago, when my generation was able to watch the blacksmith shoeing horses.

Every single change has increased the requirements for knowledge, and every single change has increased the demands for reading and writing, and the changes during the last two generations have been the greatest ones by far. At least they are the changes to require most in the fields of reading and writing and foreign languages - - - etc. from everybody in the society.

In this world the Disabled Reader will have still fewer opportunities. Maybe in this connection it is wrong to use a personal experience as an example. It does not prove anything! It can be an illustration:

I remember being a young teacher 30 years ago at a school where the headmaster reassured me in relation to some disabled pupils in the cla s: "We also need somebody to dig potatoes, young man " he said. "These disabled readers will surely find tnemselves a good work where they will not have to be able to read or write!".

I remember it, as if it happened yesterday.

I looked past him - through the window of the classroom to the fields and the potato lifters from a tractor station. At least those machines had to be maintained, and that would call for technical skill - today it calls for reading as well. Already then I saw the backs of the last people who lay on the ground digging potatoes.

Today there is a town with a population of about 12,000 at the same place where there were then 5 or 6 farms and a school. And at the very place where the school used to be there is now a technical school and an office. It is almost symbolic.

These years we are again at a definite turning point - I believe - also when we look at the materials on which the written words now appear: - from stone and wood → from parchment to paper → and now also to screens.

On the whole, teachers in Denmark have unthinkingly accepted or more often (as a rule) hysterically rejected the electronic media - without many thoughts for the future of the children who are at school today.

This is educationally objectionable. It may prove disastrous: Not only has the medium changed. But the contents are now spread to such an extent that we can hardly grasp it. And the contents are not only to the delight of a few highly trained specialists, but of everyone.

The contents of reading cannot be detached from the form. One must look at the contents which are read. One must look at the ways in which reading takes place. - Ot to put it more precisely:

One must look at the reader - the person - in the given situation which depends on time and place.

It would be sensible to take these circumstances seriously - within the reading research, for the reading methodologists, and for the teachers - also in the classroom teaching.

It is not very pleasant to put forward these comments to people working with disabled readers; for it will be our pupils who will have difficult times in every situatic in life in the new world.

We have not done a good piece of work, until we have prepared our pupils for the daily life which will be theirs - both 20 and 30 years after the turn of the year of 2000.

We must adapt them positively for reading and writing - also other languages than their own. He or she who has only one language will become handicapped, presumably also, even if it is not one of the small languages.

We must seek to make the pupils keep on trying to learn to read and write.

We must seek to make society help them in the best possible way.

We must introduce them to other media than the printed ones and teach them to use these other media in the best possible way.

And we know that we are in the middle of a merciless fight - against a development where the risk that the weakest will be cut off increases all the time. Is "Full Participation" a realistic practicability for everyone - on the conditions of the individual?

Reading during the next decade
Consequences of what we know today

But is reading not the same - no matter if it is reading of a runic stone or a display unit? Maybe it is - but only maybe. There are some common features; maybe even many.

But what about for instance

- power of abstraction?
- development of concepts?
- attitude?
- level of complexity?
- previous knowledge?

At least it will not be the same reading. Neither will the same groups of persons read in the same way as before.

And at this point we shall inevitably have to consider

- how many were readers in the days of the runes;
- how many were readers in the sixteenth century, when the runes had disappeared long ago;
- how many were readers in 1880, when also the parchment was long gone;
- how many were readers in 1920, when reading was for everyone;
- and how many must necessarily be good readers today and presumably tomorrow?

Today we are at the threshold of the information age (or maybe rather the age of integrated information of world-wide computerized data through televison, telephone network, satellites, etc.) (Servan-Schreiber, 1981).

During this period, education (also in reading) seems to become a race between an explosion of knowledge - and a fear among 'rulers' and 'institutions' who are anxious not to be able to control this explosion of knowledge - whether religious, political, or cultural leaders.

- We never had more reason for concern than now. We seem to be unable to move with the times.

The requirements are increasing. The demands on everybody are increasing.

H.G. Wells, who is well-known, a.o., from his bock: "War of the Worlds", said: "More and more human history becomes a race between Education and Catastrophe". It looks, as if he is going to be right. (Wells, 1920).

If we do not succeed in getting everyone to move on, we may get into trouble.

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In this beginning chaos there is reason to point out that reading is still a skill; reading is something which must be practised systematically. We are the ones who must make the pupils practise.

Reading - is also realization, and this is fundamental. We are the ones who must never forget this in our teaching - for all pupils.

Reading must not be allowed to disappear in communication - which is also reading; - and that is also something we must teach our pupils. That reading is also contents and that among other things reading is important for the continuation of cultural heritage, for the enlargement of knowledge, are things which we must keep in view.

An interposed question: Are teachers to be criticized?

When it is said that within the area of reading we teachers think like cavemen, it is perhaps a fair criticism. But only, if it is underlined that this criticism does not include the teachers who have taught like they did. Because they have taught correctly, from the conditions of their time.

Neither does the criticism include the teachers who teach like they do today. Because they teach from what they were taught and from the requirements made upon them.

The criticism must primarily be conducted towards ourselves - who in our capacity as reading researchers look at reading even today

- for instance, as if "reading" was only book reading,
- for instance, as if, on the whole, reading was still the same thing, as when we went to school. At that time reading was considered something which was learned at the age of 5-8 and principally never changed.

Another interposed question: Are we able to secure the school for the future?

The school cannot even promise to "keep up". In his book, "The Future Shock", Alvin Toffler predicted that the world is on its way "into a world of changes which may force the existing institutions up against the wall and overthrow the most consolidated psychological concepts". (Toffler, 1972).

The writer of the book was accused of speculating in sensation. But when reading the book again today, only ten years later, one must establish that Toffler clearly underestimated the speed at which the changes have taken place.

The book realized the closeness of the technological progress, but it did not contain, for instance, the slightest hint of the microprocessors, the chips! A better proof of the speed at which everything is developing cannot be produced.

Even Toffler did not predict such things. We can almost promise that we shall not be able to keep up at all.

A securing for the future cannot be provided by the school. At the most, the school can try to work out what is on its way. If the school omits to do so, it will not live up to about the only thing which is certain: That the children will grow up in a world different to ours. Also with regard to reading.

We cannot even define the possibilities which will be contained in 'reading' in just one or two decades from now. But we can try to extrapolate some of what we can now see in the light of change. And in that light the sides of experience are also important. The contents and the realization are still in the centre.

"Full Participation"? -
a personal comment

Reading has changed - I believe.
At least many relations - if not all - concerning reading have changed. At any rate, the possibilities of the readers are changing. The requirements are changing - they increase.

And is then "Full Participation" for everyone a realistic practicability?

From time to time the most unbelievable things do happen. We must choose to believe in the impossible.

At least we must be aware that we are on our way all the time, and we must be aware that we have not found the final answers with regard to reading in a future which we do not know.

We only know that the future will make larger demands on everyone who is to take part in it. Also larger demands as far as reading is concerned.

Everyone has a right to demand "Full Participation". Whether they will have the possibility of it depends on us

- as teachers and researchers;
- as family and fellow citizens;
- as persons who believe in the possibilities of mankind, who have to believe in all possibilities.

That is the hope to bear us along during the next decade. Perhaps it is the most important hope?

Perhaps it is the only hope?

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